

some departments indeed well-nigh an impossibility, a glance backward into the territories investigated by the early pioneers cannot but awaken a feeling of envy. On whichever side they turned something entirely novel was almost sure to meet their gaze. They had only to stretch out their hands and a veritable Klondyke of rich rewards awaited their grasp. No wonder that their imaginations were aroused to the highest pitch, and that conclusions and anticipations should be indulged in, which would require time and the crucible of criticism, and more exact observation to reduce to their proper value. In New Brunswick the period of pioneer exploration, and of enthusiastic but not always well justified prophecy, is identified with the name of Dr. Abraham Gesner, a sketch of whose life and labours has been published by the Society in its No. XV. Bulletin. That of the beginning of more exact observation and of critical analysis is similarly associated with the subject of the present sketch, Dr. James Robb.

Dr. Robb was born in the city of Stirling, Scotland, in the year 1815. Of his early life and education I have been unable to obtain any particulars, but, from letters written at the time, I find that he entered upon a course of medical study in Edinburgh University in the year 1831. He could hardly have ever entered seriously upon the practice of his profession, for in August of the year 1835 we find him travelling, while still a student, on the continent of Europe, and in September, 1837, he had already come to New Brunswick to accept the position of Lecturer in Chemistry and Natural History in King's College (now the University of New Brunswick), in which as Professor he continued to work until the time of his death, in 1861.

It is very evident that, even at the time of his European journey, which lasted for several months, he had already acquired a fondness for scientific, as distinguished from merely medical or professional, work, for he himself says, in writing to his mother, that the trip "was more for science than for pleasure," and resulted in the "collection of vast numbers of plants and shells and minerals." He must also have already gained for himself an enviable reputation as a naturalist, for he was accompanied by Dr. Van Beneden, already well known in the scientific world, and carried with him letters to many distinguished savants, making, as he says, the entire journey a "*voyage d'agrément*." Switzerland would seem to have had special attractions for him, though Nice, Milan, Genoa and Sardinia were also visited. The journey was made *on foot*, and in the passage of the Juras was not unattended with danger, the party being on one occasion storm-bound for three days in

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